Nancy Hanks Lincoln Public Library

NANCY HANKS LINCOLN PUBLIC LIBRARY
Historical Book Collection

The text of this book remains unchanged from the original published version. It should be noted that some comments or words in this edition might be culturally insensitive to certain readers. Views and words of the author or authors are theirs alone and not of the Nancy Hanks Lincoln Public Library. Certain words or slang used in the past had different cultural meanings at the time and might not mean the same thing today.

Publishing and spelling errors remain unchanged from the original versions. All text images were reproduced exactly without changes to the existing material.

Lorraine: 1918.

A. W. Elson & Co., Belmont, Mass.

Jack W. Burdick

Lorraine : 1918

By

Joel W. Burdick

Captain A. R. C.

With the American Expeditionary Forces in France

New Haven:

Privately Printed by Yale University Press

Mdccccxix

Copyright, 1919, by
Joel W. Burdick.

Foreword.

I YIELD *to the suggestion that these letters, written with no thought of publication, may be of family interest.*

They are sketches of observations while on service in France for the American Red Cross in the final year of the war, and were sent to my wife whose unremitting efforts at home in every activity of war work are an inspiring example of accomplishment.

The restraints of censorship excluded many incidents in which I had part or which came under my notice. These, however, were of a military character, and their omission can be supplied by the extensive literature concerning that phase of the war. The more repulsive aspects of the conflict, the saddening hospital experiences, the suffering of the civil populations of the devastated districts, and the hardships and endurance of our soldiers under severe conditions are for the same reason but lightly touched upon. If "economy of line" suggest in these etchings something of the atmosphere of a warworn but beautiful region of France during a unique period, they will have served their purpose.

Lorraine

1918

ON March 27, 1918, I received a telegram from R. G. Hutchins Jr., Vice President of the National Bank of Commerce, New York, that he wanted me to accompany him to France to engage in Red Cross work, and to be ready to sail on April 6. This was followed by instructions from Washington to take a physical examination, be inoculated for smallpox, typhoid, and paratyphoid, secure passport, provide myself with a regulation American Army Officer's uniform and report in New York. These preliminaries attended to, I went aboard the S. S. *Lapland* at 10 A.M. on the

appointed date and started on the voyage at 6.20 P.M. In addition to the civilian passengers, there were nineteen Red Cross men in our party, the 308th Regiment of the National Army, which was the first unit of drafted men sent overseas, a number of Naval Officers and several Naval Aviators. On the morning of the 8th we arrived at Halifax. The harbor was a scene of intense activity. A little before sunset we sailed again, one of a convoy of ten troopships, including the U.S. war ship *St. Louis*, moving in straight formation, illuminated by a gorgeous sunset in fine but cold weather. Outside the entrance to the harbor we saw the wreck of the ill-fated hospital ship *Florizel*, which had been thrown high on the rocks a few days before with great loss of life. The rest of the voyage was interesting with boat drills, submarine watches under strenuous conditions of weather and sea, the close formation of the camouflaged ships, the absence of a ray of light at night, the queer speculations as to our destination, our zigzag course, life-boat and military drills, gun practice, smoke-box experiments, and the intimacies of a long voyage.

After the third day out of Halifax, passengers were required to wear life-belts continuously, the troops were called from be-

low to sleep on the upper decks and we were cautioned that we were in dangerous waters, and that our watch, which was under command of a fine American Naval Officer, Commander Stockwell, must not relax its vigilance for an instant. The morning of the twelfth day from New York opened on a cold, steel blue sea, sharply cut against the pale horizon. There were mountains far to the east and then mountains to the west, and we knew for the first time during the voyage where we were. They were the Welsh and Irish mountains, and we were going to Liverpool.

* * *

April 18, 1918.

WE are now in prospect of reaching port tomorrow. The voyage has been wonderfully interesting, and the weather good for this season. We shall have been out almost two weeks when we land. For the past two days we have been in dangerous submarine waters, but have thus far seen none of the sea-wolves and you would not wonder that we have not if I were permitted to tell you more. For the past week I have been on submarine watch from 2 to 4 P.M., 10 P.M to midnight and 6 to 8 A.M. daily. My station is on the uncovered top

of the wheel-house over the bridge, a windy and exposed place, but the woolen helmet and the two sweaters are life-savers. The authorities offered to let someone take my place out of consideration for my gray hair. I refused, however, and shall stick to my post, which seems to please them. They think that I am a tough old sea-dog, and in fact I have been in fine health and spirits every minute of the voyage. Of course we never knew where we were, and it was only by the stars or sun that we could tell our direction: we sailed to every point of the compass.

The night watch was a lonesome and uncomfortable vigil. I would entertain myself by testing my memory of lines descriptive of fine night skies, or of howling winds and of piercing cold. On clear nights Browning's Meditations of *Johannes Agricola* would come to me:

"There's heaven above, and night by night
I look right through its gorgeous roof;"

Again I would see in the foremast with its horizontal spar, a great white cross in the illumination of the half moon, leading the silent and darkened fleet, the ancient symbol of the Crusaders bent on a holier mission than theirs. These dreamings, however, must not interfere with the frequent scanning of the sea through the night glasses for the dreaded periscope, or the contact-mine, which we were told might look like a floating baseball. If anything were sighted, our duty was to call the attention of the officer pacing the bridge below us. The morning watch had its compensations in the breaking of the dawn and the sunrise, and on one memorable morning I saw on the eastern horizon the smoke of eight British torpedo-boat destroyers coming to us as we entered the danger zone. They ap-

proached from about equi-distant points in the 180° half-circle within a few minutes of each other and were at least two hundred miles from land, a fine example of accurate navigation. Their maneuvers as they neared the convoy, and thereafter constantly day and night, were of never failing interest.

April 19, 1918. 5.30 P.M.

WE have just taken the pilot aboard and are at last in safe waters and are crossing the bar into Liverpool Harbor. Last night and today were anxious and dangerous. We crawled carefully through the mine fields and submarine waters in the most infested zone. Last night two ships were torpedoed in the vicinity of our fleet, but we did not see the tragedy. Tonight for the first time in a week we can undress and go to bed like Christians, and everybody is happy. We would have been a rich prize for the subs and the T. B. D's worked all of the time like a pack of trained bird-dogs hunting out coveys of quail. It was beautiful! Dinner is called. We sleep aboard tonight.

We disembarked the next morning. Our welcome was enthusiastic, and the troops were greeted joyously by everyone. Leaving for London about two o'clock and riding through England in the finest phase of its spring green and bloom, in delightful contrast with the cold voyage, we arrived in London before dark. Here we saw the first realities of war. The hotels and streets were alive with British and Colonial soldiers. The city was black dark at night, the food at the restaurants was scant and poor. We were two days at the Savoy Hotel where we saw for the first time Generals Pershing and Bliss and Ad-

miral Sims. There were marching troops in the streets and a great procession of uniformed women, the W. A. A. C., or "Wacks," leaving for France. We left at 2 P.M. for Havre via Southampton. The steamer *Normania* in which we crossed is one of the swiftest boats afloat. There was much passport formality at Liverpool, London, Southampton, and Havre.

We arrived in port on the morning of April 23, and left for Paris at 5.10 P.M. arriving at 10.30. It was a bright, moonlight night, and an air raid was expected.

Our party was hurried into a dark, covered truck where we rode on our baggage through the black streets to the Continental Hotel. The Boche, however, did not come until the following night, and then got only as far as the outskirts of the city.

April 24, 1918.

ARRIVED last night. Am quartered here until further orders. The weather is lovely, and Paris is as beautiful as ever. Called at the Westminster this morning, and was remembered. The proprietor is in the Italian artillery service. Called at Henry's at 11 A.M. and drank one of our old favorites to your health. There was an attempted air raid last night. They are taken much as a matter of course on bright nights. Everyone is on meal ticket rations, but the food is not bad and is sufficient for physical needs and is very expensive.

Paris, April 26, 1918.

WE are waiting here until arrangements are completed to divide the men between the various headquarters. Last night I attended a farewell dinner to H.P.Davison at the

D'Orsay Palace Hotel. About one hundred and twenty-five Red Cross men were present. Spring is on, and the streets are beautiful. There is little sadness visible, and while almost every woman is in black and hundreds of maimed soldiers are everywhere, they appear to be cheerful. It is wonderful! These people are the admiration of everyone. Even we do not begin to appreciate how brave they are under the greatest misfortunes that ever befell a nation.

Paris, generally, looks as it did when you last saw it save for the almost empty hotels and the blackness of the streets at night. The city is thronged with uniformed men, many of them not more than three or four hours returned from the front. They are all picturesque and interesting.

One feels like a spectator in the greatest events and of the greatest show that the world has ever staged, and all say that nothing in life has ever had a fraction of the interest that work here has. The work everywhere is big enough for the biggest men. French morale is believed to be higher than at any time since the first year of the war. The situation two weeks ago was the most critical since the Marne, but now it is believed that the Germans are finally held. Confidence is in the air; and unless capital mistakes are made, there is ground for hope that we are entering the final phase.

The big German gun sent a few shells to the country about here yesterday. I spent the greater part of the day visiting the many Red Cross shipping-stations, warehouses, and factories in Paris. You can form no conception of the magnitude and usefulness of their work. I saw millions and millions of dollars worth of supplies of every kind in great warehouses

and in train loads moving to the front. One depot is the central point for receiving and distributing the donations, others are for purchased supplies. There are acres of hospital supplies. I do hope that the people at home can half realize how necessary to the winning of the war it is that the Red Cross support should be unlimited. I am frank to say that I did not begin to appraise its great work or its great importance. It is vital, and the Expeditionary Army relies upon its assistance and activities to support it behind the lines. After the Army itself the Red Cross is by far the biggest thing in the war. I have completed my shopping. Almost everything can be bought here. Uniforms cost less than in New York or Pittsburgh—shoes, somewhat more. Food is of course high, and I have seen no white bread or sugar since arriving in England. I am perfectly well and am eager for work.

Paris, May 4.

THE consolidation of the Armies has somewhat complicated the plans for our work, but they are gradually being straightened out. In the meantime, like everyone who comes over here, we must wait patiently. Nothing can be hurried, but in time things are adjusted. The machinery is big and complex, and is not in all respects working smoothly; nor is it always managed by the kind of men the big work demands. Some of our most impatient men have received their assignments and have gone to various headquarters.

My work promises to be more comprehensive and important than I thought it might be. Young men who can carry a gun are not wanted in these non-combatant organizations and

are looked upon with little favor, least of all by the fighting man. I think that any healthy man under forty-five should not come unless he has a pretty thick skin. The hostess houses look empty and desolate, while the cafés are crowded. The chaps I meet here do not seem to care much about being mothered.

Department stores are crowded; life on the streets is active, and there are apparently enough taxis to serve public needs. It is curious how quickly one becomes accustomed to strange street scenes. It seems as if every French regiment has a different uniform; and there are thousands of officers and soldiers, universal mourning dress, and crippled men everywhere. My elevator boy wears the *Croix de Guerre*, and has only one arm. He is a gentle, cheerful, and likable chap; has been two years at the front, and was in nearly all of the great battles. And so it is everywhere: medals on doorkeepers and clerks, street cleaners, and workers of every kind who have been invalided. From all sources one hears praise of these wonderful people; of their great bravery and cheerful fortitude there can be no question.

I am perfectly well, and shall just await patiently my assignment, which may be anywhere. Whether censorship will let me indicate the region when I do gō, I cannot tell; but it is almost impossible to learn in what part of France any particular American officer or soldier is.

Paris, May 8.

NO one has received any home mail. We are going to the office every morning and coming away disappointed.

I am leaving Paris on Monday for a place in a very beauti-

ful section of France—on a mission, which I think I am going to like. The work is important and interesting. I fear the censor will not permit me to say more. We are under military rules, and they are very strict as to information concerning places or movements. I shall supervise the Red Cross hospital activities over a large and active zone. The assignment exceeds in magnitude and responsibility anything that I had anticipated. The work is all very big, and one has to multiply the results of any former experience by almost all the powers of the imagination to reach the necessary end. The sole object of everything being done is the winning of the war, and to this men are expected to devote every ounce of energy; and this means that as the war is the greatest expenditure of energy ever known, so must all individual effort be likewise. I shall be glad to leave Paris and get into the open country. I meet old acquaintances every day. The weather has been almost continuously dark and cold. On the rare sunny days the profusion of lilacs and rhododendrons in the parks quickly makes one forget the gloomy days. One hears but little war talk; but feels its presence in the ceaseless processions of supply trains of *camions* moving to and from the front through the *rue Rivoli*, and the coming and going of uniformed men from all parts of the earth. Four of us went to the *Tour d'Argent* for a pressed duck the other night, and were the only customers; and so it is everywhere at the high class restaurants. Pruniers, however, was crowded. Opera and *Comédiè Français* performances are well attended, but one is struck by the absence of display of dress or ornament, other than uniforms.

Lorraine: 1918.

Paris, May 12, 1918.

STILL no letters from home. I am leaving on Wednesday for "somewhere in France," if I could say where, you would not feel anxious about me. The city is full of Americans; and wherever one turns, they are in evidence.

I feel no more surprised to meet people I know than I would be in New York. Today is dark; and, on the whole, the weather has been raw nearly all of the time I have been here. Still Paris is beautiful in its spring dress, and in many ways is of course more interesting than in normal times. The streets are rich in color and life. Last Thursday was Ascension Day, one of the great festivals. The weather was bright, the boulevards and cafés were crowded. One could hardly cross the streets, the traffic was so dense; and mixed in with automobiles and taxis were great lorries coming from or going to the front. Hundreds of poilus in every kind of uniform and in every degree of convalescence were sitting outside the cafés with their girls and friends as cheerfully as if they had not been shot up. This morning I saw several hundred boys and girls in Alsatian costume with drum corps, banners, and military escorts marching through the *rue Rivoli* with fine swing and enthusiasm, carrying wreaths and flowers with which to decorate the Alsace-Lorraine monument. It was a beautiful thing to look at. The girls and boys were dressed alike in white jerseys, white tam-o'shanters, and skin-fitting white tights *à l'Alsatienne*, with high heads and springy, rapid stride—a really wonderful and lovely spectacle. I wished that you were with me to see it. And, by the way, I have wandered pretty well over Paris, in the old quarters, the parks, and on the boulevards; and I have

scarcely seen one of the hundreds of children with soiled face or hands. No matter how poorly they may be dressed, they are all clean—and so are their clothes. A tribute to the French mother. It is also worth while to note that the war has caused no relaxation in the pains the city takes to keep its streets clean. Paris is as immaculate in this respect as ever. Still I am glad to leave here. I am to go into a fine part of the country on an inspection and observation tour among the hospitals where our soldiers are. Keep on writing. Some day such of your letters as the Boches have not sent to the bottom of the sea will reach me, and I cannot tell you how eagerly I await them.

A. P. O. No. 731, *France, May* 16, 1918.

I ARRIVED at my post yesterday. This is an interesting and picturesque village. I take my meals at an officers' club, and shall probably have a room near my office in a first-class French family. Later I may get quarters in an old château, which the fellows who arrived earlier have taken over. Our food is good, we live something as we would at Ogilvy's Camp on the Tobique so far as conventionalities and conveniences are concerned. I shall spend two or three days automobiling around the adjacent country, inspecting hospitals and camps. It will interest you to know that I found S—— here, whose room I occupied last night, and who is in charge of the section of supplies at this post. He was surprised and pleased to see me. I rode about five hours yesterday by rail and then thirty-five miles by auto to reach my destination. Health perfect.

Lorraine: 1918.

A. P. O. 731, *France, May* 20, 1918.

AT last four of your letters came in a bunch. On Friday I motored to a place about forty miles distant to inspect a base hospital, returning on Saturday via another large hospital.

Interesting things follow in such quick succession that I would have to write every day to keep you informed as to my movements. One hardly knows where he may be called in the next hour so that it is scarcely worth while to unpack one's trunk. This may be my headquarters for the rest of the season or I may have to go tonight a hundred or more miles away. This town is something like Angoulême, quite as picturesquely situated and perhaps even more ancient.

The surrounding country reminds one of the landscape around Gettysburg with beautiful cultivated valleys and many wooded hills. The forests are extensive, and wild boars are said to be a nuisance, the state paying a bounty for killing them. Officers hunt them with local sportsmen. Yesterday (Sunday), with Mrs. T—— and S——, took a fourteen mile walk to visit a famous shrine. Today I expect to help entertain the celebrated Miss—— for a day or two. Women with self-appointed missions are looked upon as something of a trial in these advance zones; that is to say, those who are rich in money and fads, and poor in common sense. One wants to do queer things in hospital wards with some damn system of color or design to cheer the patients. The kind of decoration the average man wants while lying on a cot is a picture of a girl pulling up her stocking or some such cheerful thing to amuse him. I do not believe that a woman can suitably decorate a room for an un-

æsthetic man. Some of these people are really a problem over here, and the military authorities dread them as they would a Boche shelling; so it is becoming more and more difficult for them to get permission to move about the zone. The real workers, however, are splendid, self-sacrificing, and overworked women.

The foregoing observations are equally applicable to some of the men—even more perhaps—who have somehow gained admission to the country, bringing with them their long-exploded and long-haired crank theories and the consuming self-consciousness of reform missions.

Northeastern France, May 22, 1918.

YOUR last letter was of April 23. I suppose the next ones will come as a packet. Perhaps mine reach you in the same way. I am very busy.

Each day I motor from thirty to eighty miles to visit hospitals. I hope soon, however, to have more time at these headquarters. I have been placed in general charge of R. C. hospital activities in what is known as the Advance Zone. These include the placing of representatives, the construction of recreation buildings for enlisted men and patients, clubs for nurses and for officers, supervision of R. C. chaplains, the operation of farms in connection with hospitals, the distribution of supplies, except those of a medical or surgical nature, and scores of other activities. For instance: I am just now, at 6 P. M., returned from a visit to a hospital twenty miles away, filled with shell shock cases, and while there arranged for the construction of a building one hundred and twenty-five feet long by twen-

ty-five feet wide. Then after disposing of that went on ten miles beyond where the United States is building a 10,000 bed hospital which may be expanded to one of 20,000 and even 25,000 beds. Here arrangements must be made to provide everything necessary that the government does not supply: sewing machines, pianos, decorations, recreational instrumentalities; in short, a thousand and one details to ameliorate the conditions of life in these great, bare, and unsightly places. It is difficult to conceive how much there is to do and to be done expeditiously. The man who looks after the details of the farm and garden activities is Henry O. Tanner, the painter. (See his fine painting in the Carnegie permanent collection.)

Yesterday I discovered about fifty miles from here, in another direction, a hospital entirely occupied by doctors and nurses from the Allegheny General Hospital, Major King in charge. The entire expenses for equipment and transportation of this unit, I am told, are provided for through the munificence of a Pittsburgh woman.

We have a wonderful lot of men here, all of them with a record of success in their respective lines at home, who are freely giving their services and money that the country may be "made safe;" and, indeed, the magnitude of the work requires the finest quality of executive ability. The job is big in every way, and one has little time to think of anything but the work in hand. This work ranges from a Victrola needle to searching out missing men; from looking after Home Communication Service in behalf of the soldier to the construction and equipment of baseball fields and movie theatres, and, with it all, I have been every minute since leaving home in perfect

health and spirits. I am not at this writing within sound of the guns, but everything around us is war activity. I find the little French at my command a convenience, but I desperately wish that I could do better with it. A Frenchman or French woman never laughs at one's mistakes. They are polite, patient, and helpful.

My quarters are comfortable. There is a good officers' club for meals—and they are mighty good meals. I have a room with the Mortier family in a good house. It looks now, however, as if I may have to organize a mess and take a house to accommodate the growing force and to entertain visiting representatives. This arrangement is not so formidable as it sounds. A furnished town château (anything not a cottage is a château here) can be rented at from $60 to $75 a month; and the expenses of service, food, and rent, divided among the members of a mess of six or eight men, are only about $100 a month per person. In Paris it would cost $20 a day for like comforts. I hope that I shall not be called back to Paris, but one never can tell. One may be a general manager today and a motorcycle rider tomorrow; and if one is needed in some remote corner of France five hundred miles away, one may be called at an hour's notice—"*C'est la Guerre.*" The service is in a highly mobile condition, just like the army; and I think that I may be permitted to say that there is sometimes confusion and disorganization.

Ordinary business rules are thrown to the winds, and everyone has to make his own place in the work. It moves with great velocity and on a large scale, shifting with the uncertainty of war itself. The work of weeks may be in full running order

today; tonight an army division may move unexpectedly, and leave everything that has been so carefully prepared high and dry and deserted. But, nevertheless, all must be done in advance.

If operations are imminent here on a large scale, hospitalization must be anticipated on a commensurate scale. It may never be used or it may be doubled. One may be doing a work today which calls for the greatest flights of imagination only to have it scrapped tomorrow. One must be on the ground to realize what an unprecedentedly tremendous thing this war is. There is only one thought here. This is a most beautiful and in all ways a most interesting part of France; but lovely landscapes, storied castles, ancient churches, and all of the things we travel in normal times to see, are scarcely noticed.

I am becoming as well acquainted with the roads and the country within a radius of a hundred miles of here as I am with Allegheny County. I must tell you one thing, however, which was to me a real event. I have heard the nightingale. I was more fortunate than John Burroughs, whose quest in England was so near failure. In this case, the bird came to me, and this is how it happened. One night last week I visited a hospital center, where I slept in a lovely tree-embowered villa. A nightingale, close to my open window, was fitfully singing now and then through the night. I listened with much interest, and was disappointed that his song, while fine, was inferior to that of our brown thrush; and went to sleep with the feeling that John Burroughs had not missed so much after all. At three o'clock in the morning, however, he started his real song, and did not stop for an hour and a half. It was beyond belief—the

most amazingly beautiful thing in bird music! He would sing four or five seconds, stop four seconds, and so on without intermission for the hour and a half; and try as I did, I could not detect the repetition of a strain or a note during those hundreds of variations—and not one of them was harsh. By this time it was beginning to get light. I was almost exhausted with the pleasure and excitement of the most joyous hour and a half of lovely bird music I had ever heard. Joan of Arc might have mistaken this for the Celestial voices.

I am writing this letter after a hard day's work and could go on interminably if the Censor would pass some of the things I would like to tell you. I do hope that you will receive my letters without too great delay that you may know how well and how interested I am. We are having fine summer weather after an unusually disagreeable spring.

The Vosges, France, May 25, 1918.

YESTERDAY, for the first time since arriving here, I was not obliged to motor somewhere, and could devote my time to the office. The confusion incident to new work is clearing, and something like orderly routine is being established. I have a Ford and a chauffeur, always at hand and almost always in use. Yesterday a hospital C. O. applied for a delousing plant for men just in from the trenches. This involves the construction of a building equipped with showers, sterilizing vats for clothing, etc.

Another C. O. requests us to suitably furnish a house for a unit of trained nurses, who are shortly to arrive. As I am writing, an application comes in for a rest station for soldiers while

awaiting transportation from the station to the hospital; another, for a baseball field and tennis-courts for convalescents. It is all lively but interesting work. Just now I am again interrupted by a request for a shelter tent for nurses who want to swim in a river. Another, a little while ago, from the *Maire* of a small town for a little financial help for his civil hospital which has been converted into a French military one with casual American soldier patients—gave him 5000 francs—etc. I am permitted to say that I am located in the Department of the Vosges in Lorraine. Mr. Tanner, the artist-farmer, just comes in for 2500 francs to pay for seed-potatoes, which he must have in an hour. All is arranged, and Tanner happy. This is all for today.

A. P. O. 731, *Vosges, France, May* 27, 1918.

ON Saturday, went to a wonderful walled town sixty-six kilometers distant. The ride was like motoring through northern Vermont, except that here picturesque old towns and ruined castles crown many of the hill tops. The countryside is now at its best. Scarlet poppies are beginning to appear in the fields and by the roadside; the hawthorns everywhere are smothered in dense bloom—some are white and some are pink, with only the tree trunks visible under their loads of flowers. There are also flowering locust trees, which in places cover the distant hillsides with a golden yellow glow; while the fields present every shade of green. There can be nothing finer than late spring under these brilliant Lorraine skies. Our situation in this strategic town brings us in daily contact with almost every distinguished American visitor to France. A call of the roll would

read like a page from "Who's Who," but they are mostly bully fellows bent upon the supreme aim of trying to help win the war.

A day or two ago,——blew in (the man who made a lot of Red Cross noise in——) covered with medals and looking like a delegate to a firemen's convention. An amiable vanity; but in questionable taste around this rough camp where one never asks "What has he done?" but rather, "What can he do?" and "What is he doing?" and with utter indifference concerning who or what he was at home. This is really a great school of democracy for men who, in civil life, indulged the pleasant thought that they had arrived. They must begin over again and leave their reputations behind them when they land in France with the A. E. F. This applies particularly to the volunteer workers in the Non-Combatant Auxiliary forces. It is all most interesting. Daily we have at first-hand stories fresh from the front, which would delight the hearts of special correspondents. Many of them may not be printed or told except in the privileged confidence of the officers' mess table.

I wish I had time to write all my friends, but I can only write to you in intervals.

A. P. O. 731, *France, May* 30, 1918.

WE are watching the progress of the battle which began Sunday; and also the results of the "Big Bertha" bombardment of Paris, which was resumed at the same time. Last night we saw flashes in the sky, and the sound of the guns was quite distinct. Every hour has its new experience. A few minutes ago, I watched a gas drill, a file of troops putting on their masks

and going through the gas house, the door of which some soldier-artist had decorated with a well-painted representation of a skunk. It tries the heart to go through a hospital filled with gassed men. The other day I went through a hospital full of shell shocked men; but I am not going to write about such things—only to say that the genius of the Boche devils, in devising agencies of suffering and terror, makes the ingenuity of the old-time Apache seem mild by comparison. About the only thing worth while now is to put them forever out of business. They are at last being given more of their own medicine in the reprisals of our airmen than they relish.

I do wish you could see this beautiful section of France at this time of year. Don't worry about my grub; it is better than you are having at home. Our mess is not quite as formally conducted as a dinner-party. We take our morning oatmeal out of the dipper in which it is cooked, draw our coffee into bread and milk bowls, have our meat, salad, and dessert on the same plate, and do not fuss much about napkins. We have white bread, jam, and sugar, and you would love the local cheese, a kind of gruyère. The French people here love us and, quite naturally, our money; and never meet us without saluting. They are all and more in likableness than you and I thought them to be when we have been in France together. Some little Kodak snapshots of the "Capitaine" are enclosed.

June 2, 1918.

MEMORIAL Day was appropriately observed. Our Red Cross staff assembled at Base Hospital sixty-six at ten o'clock, and joined a procession of such officers and soldiers at-

tached to the hospital as could be spared, and marched about a mile through the dust and heat to a cemetery where fifty-five American soldiers are buried. An address by the Chaplain, the decoration of every grave with a wreath of flowers, which the soldiers at the hospital had helped Miss Putnam, the Red Cross Searcher, to make, and the gun salute over the graves, all in fine surroundings and under a clear sky, were the incidents.

A considerable number of French soldiers and residents of the town joined in the reverential tribute. While the ceremonies were in progress, a squadron of four air-planes passed over the cemetery.

The holiday was generally observed by the French as well as by the Americans. We are in quite tense anxiety just now about the Boche offensive going on between Rheims and Soissons. I heard of a party of American soldiers, who had been rehearsing an attack with baseball bats and grenades as a Decoration Day night surprise, with the result that they were met with a drenching of gas from the German trenches, and gave a lot of work for the surgeons to do at one of our Evacuation Hospitals. Thought and action are becoming more and more absorbed by the growing necessities of war work. Still I shall try to give you frequent brief glimpses of the things which make "atmosphere" in these strange days in Lorraine.

Yesterday, while passing through an ancient and interesting town with a castle and round tower, which reminds one of the exterior view of Loches, we met a showy church procession with a high church dignitary in gorgeous yellow vestment, walking under a crimson canopy with great, white plumes on each of its four corners and being borne by four men. A pom-

pous affair with many Russian, French, and American soldiers in the procession. Scarlet poppies are appearing, and some of the fields are as brilliant in flowering weeds as the California plains are in March. Mme. LeRoy, a hard working woman here, told me today of the loss of her husband in the war, and of a son just returning to the front after eleven months in the hospital recovering from seven wounds, but who writes to his mother daily. She was uncomplaining, but said she was beginning to grow bitter towards the Boche. Remarkable patience and restraint are characteristic of these fine spirits.

A conference of base-hospital representatives at our mess. They came from points as far as eighty miles. Yesterday (Sunday) I motored to a hospital which I had not before had an opportunity to visit, and returned in time to take a two-hour walk outside the town. The views were quite as fine as that from Richmond Hill over the Thames Valley, which you know I have always regarded as one of the most perfect. In the evening I accepted an invitation to dine with Miss P——, one of our hospital searchers, in company with another Captain and a new woman arrival assigned to another hospital. A charming affair in the garden of my hostess' billet. The dinner was cooked and served *à la Française*. An omelette with mushrooms, finely broiled veal chops, garnished with carrots, a course of new asparagus from Madame's little garden, mirabelle plum pie, and delicious, freshly picked French cherries, all washed down with a perfectly corking Chablis. Two hours of good food and good talk in a garden about one hundred feet square, with high masonry walls on three sides, the house enclosing the other. A compact bit of French economy it was with a row of flowers a-

longside two rows of cabbages, then a half dozen rows of potato plants, salad kitchen vegetables in variety, and all in a space a little larger than our back yard at home. One face of the wall was covered with trained pear trees and vines. In one corner was a vine-embowered cluster of wire chicken boxes, the entrance to which through the formally trimmed vines looked like the approach to a tiny shrine. In the corner, diagonally across, was a rabbit hutch, similarly concealed.

A round stone table with stone benches, and over all a single tall pear tree under which we sat and ate our dinner with the blue summer twilight sky above us. All this was separated from a very busy street by a twelve-foot wall, and yet was as sylvan and retired as if we were miles in the country. You see that there are bright spots even in the war zone and when they appear we make the most of them. I am crazy for news from home; things which may seem trivial to you folks are of immense interest to me.

June 3, 1918.

JUST a line to tell you that I am just fine. When weather conditions are right, we hear the faint report of the guns at the front, but they are more felt than heard. Today I was one of the hosts to a Major-General and Staff, about sixteen in number, at luncheon of which I enclose a menu. The pink champagne had "*beaucoup*" kick. Tonight, in response to my invitation, there will be a dinner to the hospital representatives in my department at our mess. They come from all sections in this zone and will number about twenty. The conference is sure to be interesting and helpful, and I expect that out of the

experiences and observations of so many fine men of first class ability, we shall all learn much to aid us in the administration of the heavy duties which war has imposed upon us in this active field.

June 5, 1918.

THIS is my first attempt with a typewriter. If it is a rough piece of work, allowance must be made for inexperience. We have to learn to get along with such means as are at hand; and it happens that a machine has arrived, but the promised stenographer has not.

There are plenty of Captains, numerous Majors, but real privates are scarce in the R. C. around here. I am trying, however, to do with my own hands whatever I can do and it is surprising how quickly one learns how to adapt one's means to one's necessities under war conditions. The climate is so fine and the air so bracing in this fairly high altitude that work is a pleasure. Just now there is a lull, and as I try to do something every minute during my working hours, it is as well for me to do this as anything else. This is a machine with a French key board; but as I have never touched any other kind and not this one until today, I do not, at least, have to unlearn anything. I have had no letters during the past week and none at all indicating that any of mine written from France have reached home. The weather continues fine, but not hot. We have in our mess, which is only a minute's walk from headquarters, seven men, a tame fox cub, a cat, a dog-puppy; and the chief animal lover of the bunch hopes to get a young wild boar. The dog and the fox play together like kittens. We sometimes have a rubber of

bridge after dinner, and it pained me last night to have to take 15 francs from the Vanderbilt fortune. I need not tell you that I am in fine health. There are lice to be had without looking far, and a form of what the army surgeons tell me used to be called the seven-year itch is prevalent. They say, however, that it can be cured in five days under proper treatment. Trench fever takes many to the hospitals and is severe for about three days. It is caused by body lice. These things are not pleasant to write about, but it is pleasant to reflect that one has escaped them all.

June 7, 1918.

Official:

From Captain J. W. Burdick, *Chief H. & H. S.*
Advance Zone.

To My beloved Wife.

Subject: A Perfect Day.

ONE. Proceeded yesterday to the rear of the battle line to visit Yale Unit Autochir Hospital under Colonel Flint. Found a wonderfully complete mobile hospital manned by Yale men, isolated on a plateau overlooking a vast extent of country. The many villages and the valleys and fields in varying states of cultivation were a great mosaic of color—overhead an intensely blue sky, crystalline air, and fine, white cloud masses. The air was filled with the cheery music of skylarks; and just behind a wooded ridge a mile or two away, now and then, the roar of many cannon putting up a barrage; observation balloons, and air-planes were above, and wounded men were being brought in from the front. I watched the process of taking their

histories, the picking of their pockets by the most expert Yale "dips," to the last half of a cracked walnut, cataloguing of same, the passing of patients to the X-ray room, into the operating department, and finally to their wards and cots. Messed with the officers at luncheon, same food to all, privates, nurses and officers alike, well cooked, plentiful, and first class in quality and quantity. To my surprise Dr. S—— sits down by me at table, then A—— comes in, and several ask about the family. It was a regular Old Home Week reunion, and I almost forgot my recently acquired military dignity in my surprise and pleasure at meeting this splendid group.

In my turn, I was able to give them an Officers' and Nurses' Club, on behalf of the A.R.C., of which they were in great need. The nurses, particularly, had no privacy, or place for recreation. In another ten days they will have a hall, a piano, dancing floor, and many minor comforts, which the army does not supply, and all as mobile and movable as the unit itself. After two hours here, moved on twenty miles to another Evacuation Hospital. The roads and fields on the way looked like a page of war pictures from the Sunday *Times*. Then to a great aviation field. In this sector, steel helmets and gas masks are "*de rigueur*." No one may be without them.

Two. Arrived at headquarters at 7:30 P.M.

Three. It was the best day I have thus far had in France.

June 11, 1918.

I WAS delighted to get the cable Sunday morning announcing the arrival of the new granddaughter. . . The morning the message came was so lovely and the country so beauti-

ful that three of my messmates and I climbed the hill to a fine bit of woods about a mile from town for a basket picnic. We had a fine luncheon, put up in Mme. La Brosse's best manner, a fine loaf under the beeches, and with a couple of bottles of champagne, which is both good and cheap here, drank to the health of the new-comer and her mother, away off here in Lorraine. I am sure the baby must be under a lucky star, and the occasion would have been perfect if the family could have been with us under these clean, great trees overlooking as handsome a country as lies under the sun. For the time, we left care and war to themselves. I have been traveling in the Ford three days to places to which my duties take me, since my last letter, but have had no adventures. I see a hundred things of minor interest in which you would be interested, but they seem unimportant now; Roman remains, quaint architecture, ancient towns and towers by the score, and other memorials of art and antiquity.

I wish I could send you postal cards, but any illustration of a place, a building, or a landscape is *défendu*. How much do you suppose it cost me to send you the cablegram of twelve words on Sunday? Four francs and twenty-five centimes, or about ninety cents, and this included a small tax. This is a special military rate. Railroad fares for members of the A.E.F. are about one-half a cent a mile.

There is an epidemic of grippe in these parts, the same disease that all of Madrid was sick with a couple of weeks ago. I have so far escaped. Light Bordeaux wine and bottled waters mixed, for luncheon and dinner, and a bowl of coffee for breakfast agree with me amazingly. *À bas les fanatiques* who pro-

pose to bar the use of these light and wholesome wines from the people's health and pleasure. They harm no one, and they do not create a craving for distilled liquors. I have seen no inebriety among the French people, and wine is an essential element in their subsistence.

June 16, 1918.

IT is well into the late Sunday afternoon before I have a moment to write you. I was up early, and came over directly from breakfast to write, but was met with a quantity of mail, and a number of callers, which kept me busy all day. I traveled the greater part of the week through a broken, interesting country into the mountains, where everything looked more Swiss than French, to the rear of the battle line, lunching with an artillery outfit *in situ*; through shell-torn villages, and to points where one is not permitted to go without helmet and mask. There was no danger, however, as there chanced to be quiet along the front which I visited. Only now and then a big gun split the air just to keep one from forgetting that the Boches were on the job.

There were plenty of incidents as there are every day, which would interest any person for a time, but which soon seem commonplace—perhaps not commonplace but familiar. On the particular front at which I had business, I met Dr. V——, the son of our old family doctor in Albany. He is in charge of Evacuation Hospital No. 2. One of my associates left for Paris today to take another position in the R. C.

It is interesting to see them come and go. With one or two exceptions I am already the oldest inhabitant of the A. R. C.

Colony here. A man blows in, settles down for life; two days later one misses him; the third day one inquires about him. Oh! he went out yesterday with the courier, having silently passed like a ship in the night, into darkness and space—and that is the last one knows about him; and on the fourth day he has passed out of one's life and memory, and there is a new bridge partner after evening mess about every fifth day. It is a very fluid business, just like the army, constantly on the move.

I am so far pretty well settled, but you may any day find my letters marked with a new A. P. O. number. I am perfectly well, and have never enjoyed life more—it is a real man's life. I hope you are in New Brunswick casting for salmon, but fear you think war work must keep you at home. You might knit in the boat, and let your guide do the casting.

June 20, 1918.

I CANNOT let this day of days pass without thinking a lot about everyone at home. It seems a short year since my last birthday when we were on our way to the Tobique. One of the disadvantages here is that we are not permitted to write about anything of real interest, and of such things life is full.

The tremendous movements of every kind, the really elemental things in the lives of all in the war zone, the passing across the screen of people we know, regardless of how intimate our short associations may have been, and the chums of yesterday go out of our lives between two suns to make way for their successors.

Yesterday a young and attractive surgeon from B—— heard I was here, and came twenty miles to see me. Since writing

three or four days ago I have been close to my office. The weather, after a month of unbroken sunshine, has become unsettled, and there has been much rain for four days. I have not as yet covered more than half of my territory, and still have some long trips to make. I have an assistant, who is almost constantly in the field; and between us this eastern section of France is becoming like an open book. I could wish no better fun in normal times than to come right to this place as a summer headquarters, get a car, and spend the season riding through the glorious country over the fine roads, which go in all directions. A short day would take me into Switzerland, or into Germany; and everywhere are picturesque monuments. Roman remains, as I have before written, are common, the country is lovely, and the people are fine. Closer association with the French of these parts only increases one's admiration for them. I find myself getting along fairly well with the language; and am not prepared to subscribe to the sentiment of one of my associates that but for the damn French language, the war would have ended long ago. I wish you could look down from my chamber window in the rear of the house, over a garden separated from the lawn by a heavy stone balustrade, surmounted with stone urns on the coping like a Watteau accessory. The garden is perhaps two hundred feet deep and seventy-five feet wide, and is the pride of M. Mortier, who daily sifts its soil through his fingers. It is innocent of weeds, and is adorned with flower beds and vegetable plots in which are cultivated potatoes, peas, beans, roots, salads, etc. High stone walls on three sides are beautified with fruit trees trained on their sides with artistic formality. Tables and chairs are

placed invitingly under the trees on the sides of the small intervening lawn, and there this charming family sit throughout the long twilights—not in the evenings, for everyone is in bed at dark. The house is immaculate; a placard on the door reads "*Essuyez vos pieds, S. V. P.*"

Diagonally across the street is the château where we mess. I am not saying much about our table because I do not want to excite your envy. You are going without that we who are in France may have. We had better leave it at that. They nearly starved me in Paris last spring, but not so in the war zone. Now as to this birthday. There is going to be a dinner tonight. Capt. V. W., a bully chap, pulls out of here with his division today, and so cannot come; but he sent over half a dozen of France's liquid sunshine to help along the feast. There will be eight men at the table to help eat your fruit cake and plum pudding, which have been carefully saved for this occasion; there will be a rubber or two afterward, and we shall all be in bed by 10:30—perhaps.

June 30, 1918.

FOR the first time since leaving home I have allowed more than a week to pass without writing. I have been and am perfectly well. I have so far escaped the "three day fever" as it is called, which is sweeping the country. The weather for more than two weeks has been colder than it was in Paris when you and I were there in June, 1913. I have continuously worn my heavy clothes with a sweater under my tunic, but summer has returned, and yesterday and today were perfect. I went to the lines again yesterday, and saw Dr. S—— at the

Yale Mobile. He and I walked through the fields to the edge of the plateau where the day before the earth might have been seen kicking into the air under the burst of shell fire; but now all was peaceful, no planes, no balloons, and not the sound of a gun. I must admit a sense of disappointment. I was unaccustomed to such quiet, and felt relaxed for want of a little excitement. There was so little evidence of anything doing that I decided to come back by the roads nearest the front, roads which are frequently shelled when the Boches have not enjoyed their breakfast. They seemed to be safe now and they were. The roads traversed an area where I saw many things, which I cannot write about; but which I shall never forget. Further along I saw the effects of a Boche bombing air-raid of the night before, which I shall also remember with no increased liking for the devils incarnate who instigated it. The work grows apace. It is an off day when we do not put over a building or two, and the work is only beginning. To add to my amusements I have, as I think I told you, charge of the A.R.C. Chaplains at the hospitals in the zone. They are of all denominations and ranks—an eminent Episcopalian bishop, priests, and ministers. This part of the job gives me little concern.

Once assigned to a post the trouble ends. This work generally is, to every one engaged in it, the finest school for the study and observation of human nature. With a sense of humor and a determination not to permit anything to ruffle or worry one, there is an inexhaustible fund of interest and even of entertainment in the work. And how quickly time passes! The days are as hours and the weeks are as days. I do not give a

thought to business affairs at home, but on my short walks in this lovely country I do find interest and charm in the things of the wayside. I found a maple tree twenty-five feet around three feet above the base, and as perfect as it was big. Giant plane trees, a dozen scenes such as Troyon or Daubigny would have loved to paint, peasants and their families in the fields like a Millet canvas, women with curious and immense paniers loaded with hay on their backs. Always air-planes in the sky, larks singing in the heavens, a great hawk sailing overhead, riches of scarlet poppies, the largest wild asters I have ever seen. Always clean and polite, little children almost invariably standing at attention and saluting the "Capitaine" as he walks by. The universal cheery "*Bon jour, M'sieu*," of the peasants, men and women, French officers in brilliant uniform, generally on a wheel, sometimes on horseback with a groom following, always with a smile and a salute, and most interesting of all, the Poilus on their way to rest from the front, trudging along with guns and complete ninety pounds of equipment on their backs, happy and determined. These wonderful French soldiers! the half has not been said in their praise. Their spirit and endurance are almost uncanny, and everybody but the Boche loves them. All these things I saw, and more, in a single hour's walk, and there are those who say that life is dull.

July 1, 1918.

I ENCLOSE extracts from my June report to Headquarters at Paris, which will convey a more intelligent idea than my discursive letters of what kind of work an A. R. C. Administrative Officer does in one of the several departments of the organization in France.

"HOME SERVICE: We have received requests for information concerning the whereabouts, condition, etc., of a large number of enlisted men, perhaps an average of three or four per day, and have been able to obtain the details asked for in a majority of instances. We find that this branch of the work is increasing with considerable rapidity.

"RECREATION HUTS: The Hut at BH 23 and 36 is nearing completion, and is about ready to receive its equipment, which has been shipped, and will be on the ground when needed. The construction of an additional Hut at that point for nurses, to cost about 35,000 francs, has been recommended by this Department, and is awaiting decision from Paris. (Since approved.) At BH 31 and 32, a Hut similar to that now nearing completion at —— has been approved, the site selected, and construction will probably begin early next week. At Mobile Hospital 39, a Bessonneau tent has been erected and suitably furnished. At Camp Hospital No. 1, a recreation hut has been ordered and shipped and will be erected when received. At BH 66, a recreation hut has been completed and furnished and is now in a satisfactory operation. At BH 116, a large hut, in process of construction on the date of my last report, is completed, and will be in operation in a few days. Authority has also been given for the construction of three additional small huts; recreation, nurses', and officers' huts. These will probably be in operation within the next month. At BH 117, a recreation hut has been completed and is in operation, and a second hut, parallel in size, to be devoted to work-shops in which patients will be trained in skilled industries, has been authorized, and shipment order for same made by Paris office on the 26th

instant. This hut, on its arrival, will be erected and equipped by the hospital authorities. At Evacuation Hospital No. 2, there is now pending a decision as to whether we shall supply a Bessonneau tent to be used at this hospital for chapel and recreation purposes. At Camp Hospital 21, the only available site for a recreation hut is the village park adjoining the hospital. Through the assistance of Major King, the C. O., permission was secured from the civil authorities to use a portion of the park, and the hut has been shipped to that point and upon arrival will be erected by the Construction Department.

"RESURRECTION OR SUNSHINE WARDS AND NURSES' QUARTERS: After arrangements made in Paris Mrs.—— was assigned to the furnishing and decoration of these rooms and quarters at BH 15, BH 18 and 116, BH 23 and 36, BH 31 and 32. The work at BH 15 was completed during the month, inspected by the writer and a commendatory report made to Paris of the results accomplished. Since that time, Mrs.—— has done excellent work in preparing nurses' quarters at BH 117 for the reception of the nurses, who have since arrived, and are highly pleased with what has been done. Mrs. —— now has work under way at —— and is working at both —— and ——.

"The writer has visited as much of the territory in his jurisdiction as was possible, consistent with the conduct of his office work, and ——, his assistant, has been almost continuously engaged in the necessary field work and investigation of conditions.

"Recreational supplies, in large volume, have been given out upon requisitions by this Department, a summary of which will no doubt be furnished you by the Supply Department.

Lorraine: 1918.

"Numerous additional activities at points other than those mentioned above are in process of investigation, and our activities are becoming more and more insistent, and there remains very much to be done as new hospitals are established and the present ones are being enlarged."

July 3, 1918.

I WISH I could give you an idea of how this part of France is preparing to celebrate our "Fourth" tomorrow. The town is everywhere decorated with our colors. It is like home, and how fine it all is and how much of interest every hour brings. Let me tell you about today only; I visited a local hospital this morning and drove out to another this afternoon. I will not tell you, because I cannot nor could any one else, of the scores of individual cases we meet. But of stories, every nurse and every searcher could tell enough to make a book, from her experiences of a single day. Today an American private I saw proves to have just become an English peer. Another boy almost dying of grief, but not badly hurt, and whose slow convalescence has puzzled the doctors and nurses, finally tells of being in charge of a machine gun, which he was under orders not to leave for an instant under any circumstances. With a squad of men, among them his twin brother, they go over the top, are surprised by the Boches, the brother had a leg blown off by a shell, and cries out to his brother at the gun, for God's sake to come and get him. The brother at the gun struggles between the order to stay at his gun, or possibly sacrifice other men by leaving it and going to the rescue. He decides to obey orders; whereupon the wounded brother yells

out to him, "You will get your's for this," and either dies or is captured, we are trying to find out which.

A regular army officer of high rank requested us to look up, if possible, a wayward brother who was missing, A.W.O.L. (absent without leave) and have him cared for if needed. We searched diligently, and located him in a place far away from where he should have been. You remember young E. H. who was with us on our trip to Alaska. He died in a hospital in this zone the other day. He was an inmate there on two occasions when I went through the wards, and I did not know it. He was a 2d Lieutenant of Artillery, and died after a somewhat protracted illness from heart trouble. The story came to me by chance an hour ago. He was a gifted and much beloved boy. I go about twenty-five miles from here tomorrow to help celebrate the Fourth.

The next day I plan to leave on a ten days' auto trip to visit a score of activities which are in my charge, but which I have not yet seen.

July 14, 1918.

YOUR letter of June 11th came yesterday ahead of one previously written. This was a gain of a week because of having been sent through the American mails. I returned yesterday from an eight days' motor trip. Four days of the journey was as near the front as we could go; some of it along roads which had recently been shelled, and a part of the route was shelled only two days before. We passed through several towns made historic by Boche atrocities in the early months of the war, and saw many memorials of the invasion. At one place where

we spent the night, we went twice down and up two flights of stairs to reach an *abri* across the street when the *alerte* sirens warned that Boche bombing-planes were coming; but nothing happened, although the place has been bombed almost every night for months. At another town we heard near-by firing, as we were sitting down to breakfast. We went out, and saw a German plane almost directly overhead being attacked by anti-air-craft guns. It was surrounded by the white and sometimes black puffs of bursting shells against the deep blue sky, but managed to escape. After breakfast we went up a mountain road through the heavily timbered and superb Vosges to the crest, whence we looked down on Germany, the Rhine in the middle distance and the Black Forest beyond. We were then perhaps a mile across the German frontier, going cautiously along the camouflaged road so as not to draw shell fire—the Boches in such places almost invariably shoot at a dust cloud—when a "210" whined over our heads and exploded in the forest below us. Almost immediately a Boche plane appeared above us followed by volleys of shrapnel. What happened to it I do not know, but I fear it escaped.

About this time we thought it time to return to France as there were too many observation balloons up. After lunch we resumed our journey to another city going on our way over a mountain four thousand feet high, from the summit of which we could see other German towns lying quietly in the plains to the east, and in the far distance the Alps. The day was clear and calm. The road over this isolated peak runs above the timber line to within half a mile of the summit, which is treeless and shelterless, except for some trenches and wire entangle-

ments on the top. We left our car on the road while the chauffeur, my traveling companion, Schuyler Parsons, and I walked up the steep, grassy slope to enjoy the panorama from the top. Observation balloons were hovering above the lines on adjoining mountains, but they seemed far enough away. Very soon, however, we heard a noise like a planing-mill and an air-craft was pretty high above us. With no place to hide and on a bare mountain top I felt myself as big as the gigantic "Spectre of the Brocken," my chauffeur running down the fields as if the devil were after him, Parsons unconcerned, and I looking down into a trench for a safe shelter from machine-gun fire, earnestly, but with apparent indifference, so that Parsons would not think I was nervous. I sometimes wonder if he were not the best actor at that moment. The chauffeur was frankly honest. Either the pilot did not observe us or perhaps was after more important game, as he soon disappeared. That evening we arrived in a border city after a day of thrills. It was the most wonderful travel day in respect to scenery and general interest in my experience. In fact the entire eight days during which time the weather was almost continuously fine were enjoyable in a way which never can be felt by anyone who travels this route after the war. Of the military operations and preparation which we saw I cannot of course write. This trip substantially covered all of the territory in the zone which I am looking after that I had not seen before.

There were, as of incidental interest during the journey, fine old Cathedrals, walled cities, ancient monuments, great garrisons in intense activity, spectacular troop movements—to say nothing of the finest scenery in France, and I know

of none finer anywhere. There was also the unique sensation of traveling everywhere by and through armed camps.

You would have enjoyed the enthusiasm with which all France celebrated the Fourth of July. Today is the French national holiday. I attended the ceremonies at the renaming of a street for President Wilson. This is being done almost everywhere in France. But for the busy life here we could get homesick. There are no hours or Sundays to give time for reflection. Our recreation is a rubber or two of bridge evenings, or a walk into the country as we can find the time.

Our sleep must be regular, and I am in consequence in good form; in fact, I am looked upon here as something of a curiosity of endurance.—Events pass so quickly that I am already a Veteran here, and in these kaleidoscopic transformations we cannot be sure of what will happen tomorrow. Every day new faces come and go. Every day unexpected problems arise. These are exciting and great days, and all is as unstable as April weather, but it is most interesting.

One thinks nothing of unexpectedly meeting an old acquaintance in this far corner of the world, and let me say that America is more in evidence here than is realized at home. A placard on my wall says that paper is scarce in France, and I am a trifle tired.

July 20, 1918.

THE weather has been hot, but the evenings are lovely in their long twilights and beautiful skies.

We have heard *alertes* of Boche bombing-planes four nights this week, but they were not for this town, which has not as

yet been bombed; and, indeed, there is nothing here which would warrant much waste of ammunition. As I must write almost exclusively of things of little interest while in the midst of great things, I employ my few spare minutes in observing trifles.

For example, it would seem in these unsanitary conditions as if house flies ought at this season to be an intolerable pest, and yet they are so few that their absence is noticeable to Americans. Some observers suggest that in this part of France there is a parasite which keeps them down; if so I hope some scientist will discover and introduce it in America.

Again, the range of greens in the landscape is richer and more varied than at home. I am leaving my room at the Mortiers' to take one in the Château where our officers mess. The change is convenient; but is otherwise not a great advantage, as I am comfortable and contented. Did I tell you how our mess is organized? This is the most important A. R. C. post out of Paris. Our principal officers have the house, which contains a good library, billiard room, and spacious chambers. A competent woman cook, Mme. LaBrosse, with her fifteen year old daughter, Georgette, runs the menage, and if I could describe the *omelettes soufflés au rhum*, it would excite your envy. She cooks wild-boar meat in wine and spices, (she can even make *lapin* palatable), gives us the delicious salads, such as the French only know how to prepare, and you know what French veal is—we have that in perfection. At this season we have an abundance of peaches and apricots, ripened against the sunny side of a wall, and bowls of little wild strawberries which grow in profusion. At every dinner we are enter-

tained with fresh stories of adventure by officers passing through to whom our table is always open, and it is a rare day that we do not hear something which a newspaper man would be glad to feature. Last night two aviators, *in repos* after their strenuous work in the great battle of this week, thrilled us with stories of their air-battles; and so it goes. We hear at first hand of almost unbelievable adventures and valor. As I am writing, news of the great battle at Château-Thierry comes to cheer our hearts with its accounts of the heroism of our great American fighters.

It is great, and you cannot realize the joy with which we are inspired. There have been anxious days. It has been among the possibilities that the enemy might break our lines in this sector; in which event, a day would bring them upon us. In this remote possibility I may be permitted to say that our plans had been matured to move our personnel, our lighter and more valuable supplies, and to destroy our warehouses if necessary. This danger is no longer imminent and is probably wholly removed.

I would like to read the accounts in the American papers, but we rarely see one. Meantime we go on building, equipping, renting, and farming; and there is no end to the multiplying activities. The wise policy of the A. R. C. in conferring extensive jurisdiction upon its heads, makes for expedition; and time saving is the essence of accomplishment in war. Paper work, unlike the practice in the army, is reduced to a minimum; consequently, the A. R. C. quickly brings matters to a conclusion, which army circumlocution would take weeks to do. One of my representatives was called upon this week to

witness the execution of a negro miscreant soldier, as a part of his duty. The culprit was properly hanged, as I can personally vouch, and he well deserved it.

I want to reiterate all I have heretofore said about these likable French people. My admiration for them grows apace, and these men, all of them in uniform, save the very young and the very old, are modest, polite, uncomplaining, living and fighting cheerfully, grimly, and with an utter disregard of comfort and conveniences. They are the amazement and admiration of all in our forces. This is not exaggeration; their war efficiency and quiet fortitude cannot be overstated. I meet them everywhere: singly, trudging along the hot and dusty roads for miles to *repos* under a load of accoutrement, gun and all, (these they always take with them when on "permission") which makes one wonder how they can carry them at all; dauntless airmen taking to their planes; and miles of infantry on their marches or making and breaking camp by the wayside in the broad fields and on the hillsides—always a thing to admire and wonder at. It makes one wish that one were young enough to bivouac with and join them in the real work instead of having to do non-combatant duty; but one should be very happy if one cannot do that, to do what little one can do.

August 1, 1918.

I FIND that a week has elapsed since my last letter. "Busy" would be an honest plea, but not a good excuse as I do find time for a rubber or two in the evening. To write this I was up at 6:30, bolted my bowl of coffee, bread and jam, and

came over to write you before the rush. I can give only a general outline of my movements of the past week.

My letters have exhausted the landscape, climate, and local customs. These are interesting, but of the things most interesting — the train loads of mangled men being discharged at the hospitals, the rushing out of supplies to care for them, moving from one place to another to see what can be done to help save life, the flights of aviators in flocks like wild geese, the night alarms (there were three last night), stories at almost every meal by aviators and officers but a few hours back from the front — of these there is not time to write. Last night at 2 A.M. two aviators alighted here, having, through a wireless error, flown a hundred miles out of their way; and they talked about it as nonchalantly as if they had gone around the wrong street corner. Such things are so numerous that they can only be sketched in quick outline. On Sunday two A. R. C. men, who had been assigned to another department, were shanghaied by me and taken to a hospital twenty-five miles away where a couple of thousand wounded men were coming in, and put to work.

I had a night ride this week after an all day motor trip over roads close to the front. During the day I went to an outpost where I saw some officers who came over on our ship. At 7 P.M. we reached a town which is bombed almost nightly. Returning, a brilliant full moon illuminated the white road for miles ahead. Our route was through a section which the Boche had violently bombed. Two nights previously they had attacked an automobile, which carelessly had its side lights on, killing the chauffeur and peppering the two occu-

pants. We thought there might be a chance for us to see a "party" on the way home, but with the exception of a few star shells and some signal lights and a beautiful ride without lights through a landscape which could never have looked finer than under this cold bright moon, the trip was without incident. It seems that trouble mostly comes when one is not looking for it.

The work is running smoothly—have started seven or eight buildings during the week. No problem can be put aside for future thought; whatever arises must be disposed of at once or one would soon be swamped.

Am leaving for Paris tomorrow to attend a conference of the Chiefs on Sunday, and hope to be back about Tuesday. Tell Jane I have given her maple sugar to several little French children, to whom it was a thing of which they had never heard. Now and then the sun shines hotly, but we sleep under winter covers and wear wool all of the time, and almost always find a heavy overcoat not too warm when riding. The climate is bracing even in mid-summer. I have never seen such fine grain crops as France is now harvesting.

Love to all, and do not forget that of all the incidents in the life over here, letters from home are the best.

August 11, 1918.

THIS time I can truly say that I have been too busy until today to write. I went to Paris on the 2d inst. and was there one week, returning on Friday. The journey going was through a day of alternating summer showers and sunshine. The fields and hills everywhere were golden with, perhaps,

as fine a crop of grain in harvest as France has had. Was finely entertained in Paris. Was kept busy until Thursday; that day I had to myself. Paris, otherwise, was not a comfortable place. "Big Bertha" was busy all of the time. One day while at lunch at a restaurant under the trees, which you know very well, three shells dropped uncomfortably near, exploding with great violence.

The next day at 5 P.M. while taking a beer with an aviator friend from Pittsburgh outside a café, which you also know very well, "Bertha" smashed into the front of a hotel only a block away. I am afraid that, like a hundred others who were similarly taking their *aperitifs*, we ran away from that café, and the waiter never did get pay for those beers. That evening I was asked to dine at the apartment of my friend Schuyler Parsons. He stated, however, that during the day two "Berthas" had fallen in the same block, and that if I preferred, we would go to another quarter of town to dine. I chose the shell torn quarter in the chance that only a miracle would direct a shell from seventy-five miles to a block where two had already landed that day, and we ate a perfectly prepared and served dinner in peace. Paris shrugs its shoulders at these bloody barbarities, and marks up another score to be settled at the Peace table. The accounts of Château-Thierry in which you are reading about the work of our Americans in that awful but glorious week are not overstated. All France is thrilled with what they did, and it is pleasant now to be an American in France. Today we entertained Walter Damrosch at our mess. I sent my assistant to an aviation field this afternoon to look up some missing men, while I remained here to have time to

write. I found, on my return, three old acquaintances, five personal letters from overseas, and about a peck of Red Cross mail. This made an interesting hour after a seven hour rail ride from Paris and two hours in a flivver on a hot day, and yet I was not tired. Yesterday I decided to take the hour from six to seven P.M. three days a week for a French lesson. I would have started these when I first arrived if I could have pinched in the time. Mlle. Marcelle Mortier (pretty name and pretty girl) is my teacher. She teaches French in an English school, and has only recently returned home on her *congé*. One cannot hope to get far in the three hours a week, but the progress made by some of our people was encouraging. While writing this I looked out of the door to see a flock of fourteen bombing-planes sailing in perfect formation high in the blue going east. There will probably be an interesting Sunday evening somewhere in Bocheland. Last night there was an *alerte* but no attack, and so the days pass by. We are all rejoiced and conservatively hopeful that the great victories of which we hear are at last the beginning of the end. We know that they are the beginning of a not distant end, but we are preparing to see it before Christmas, *mais quand?* I am stakeholder for some of our mess who are of differing views on this point.

I am in bully health and spirits.

August 20, 1918.

SINCE writing a week ago I have motored to a large city south of here, then still farther south through the Burgundian vineyards where I saw on the way the originals of many crude illustrations of Châteaux which I had formerly observed now and then on Burgundy wine bottles. The object of the trip

was to inspect a new twenty-five thousand bed American hospital now under construction. Some three or four hundred buildings, all of either concrete or hollow tile construction, are completed. The Colonel in command assembled all the officers, about thirty in number, at headquarters; and without telling me in advance that I was to be more than simply introduced to them, placed me at his side, and called on me for a speech. I got away with it, however, unless the applause was more polite than sincere. Red Cross is easy to talk about in France. The three days I was in the Ford were hot, but the ripe looking country was beautiful. Going, I traveled along the base of the slopes of the *Côte d' Or* on my right, and to the left was a fairly level country quivering in the heat, azure in color, and accented with thousands of pointed Lombardy poplars in lines, in groups, and singly. We returned over a road back in the hills of the *Côte d' Or* through fine and big scenery, and then by a steep winding descent through a palisaded gorge, reminding one of the Chapel Pond road to Keene Valley in the Adirondacks, only the views were even more majestic. It was perhaps for ten miles as good as the best we saw in the gorges of the Tarn. You must imagine with all this a wonderful sky, blue, but not the hard, steely blue of a perfect American sky; rather of a tender hûe, but pure in color. Along the road we passed thousands of Boche prisoners just from the front being marched to their encampments. There were many other dramatic and warlike preparations, which later, perhaps, the censor might let pass, but not now.

Last Tuesday a fine looking Lieutenant of Cavalry came into the office, and asked if I recognized him. I did not, not

having seen him since he was in knickerbockers. It was ——!

I should not be surprised if the attention of the whole world were centered on this part of the universe by the time you receive this letter.

You will be interested to know that young Blair Thaw's commanding officer was at dinner with us last evening and referred to Blair in the highest terms. He is developing into a great airman—and by the way we hardly look up at planes; they are almost as common as the birds.

I wonder if you have heard of the fine custom of the French women of adopting graves of our American soldiers. One will see on a cross marking such a grave a card attached, which reads "Adopted by Madame X." This means that she will care for the grave, decorate it with flowers, and keep it in order. The women are probably mothers of boys who have fallen. In my drives I see many little enclosures on the road sides, in the fields and woods, with groups of white wooden crosses marking the graves of soldiers where they fell. I had expected to spend night before last and yesterday at a front line outpost, but was obliged to postpone the experience because of the arrival of a couple of unexpected guests who spent Sunday with us.

August 21, 1918.

YOU will doubtless get this in the same mail that carries my last letter. The fate of war brought Blair Thaw to his death not far from here, and only night before last his C. O. was relating to me his brilliant future prospects.

Lorraine: 1918.

August 27, 1918.

SINCE writing you a week ago, experience and work go on with accelerating pace until it grows almost beyond control; but it is all so interesting and so far in advance of previous effort that one lives intensely, and thrives.

This is now the most important and active of the nine A. R. C. zones into which France is divided. We have a million American soldiers in this section. Hospitals of ten thousand beds each are numerous. The Government at this time can do only the indispensable things, and it devolves upon the Red Cross to do innumerable necessary things. This means great building programs and the enormous distribution of supplies. We have already put up and equipped more structures than I can enumerate offhand. Before snow flies there must be at least fifty more completed, several of them of great size. Yesterday, owing to the urgency for the buildings, every restraint as to securing authority and the preliminaries heretofore necessary was lifted so far as concerns my own activities; and instructions were received to go ahead whenever necessary, using any material most available, adopting what plans might seem best, and have the buildings up before snow flies.

We have a large construction department, and with its head I am spending my time going from place to place, passing upon plans, selecting sites, and preparing for the necessary furnishings and personnel.

The exact words of my order from headquarters were: "Please go at this job, and win in spite of Hell and high water; the time is short." The reply was that the snow would fall on the roofs of the completed buildings. Tomorrow Pennington

and I will start out, and have at least three big buildings under way within forty-eight hours; and so on each day until the whole program is moving at once—with German prisoners, Algerians, Morocoans, ex-Russian soldiers, Annamites, Manchurians, and God knows what-not, digging dirt, mixing concrete, and nailing timbers or laying brick, all to help to get our shattered troops back to the front. After this period of sustained energy, you will not have to ask me twice to get out of my comfortable home bed and go down stairs on a cold night to put out a forgotten light—unless a great reaction sets in when it is all over. I am getting the habit.

Yesterday I visited a city I had never seen before, lunched at the Officers' club, and sitting at an adjoining table was the man who is today perhaps the most conspicuous soldier in the world—General Foch. His manner was cordial and modest, and his expression less serious and stern than his portraits.

Do not worry about my overworking. Remember that this whole big show is being run by men older than I—with no apologies to Dr. Osler.

September 1, 1918.

AS I am leaving early tomorrow morning for a three-or four-day trip, I am snatching a little time from as busy a Sunday as I have had to tell you that everything is going well here. Some of the things of personal interest in the days' happenings were nice letters from home, a call from our old Albany friend, Dr. Arthur Elting, a letter from Marshall Kiehl, 312th Machine Gun Battalion, Co.C., "somewhere in France," my first intimation that he is overseas, and a hun-

dred-mile trip to some hospitals, the starting of more constructions, and, as happens every day, the ever moving spectacle of the panoply of war. Great convoys of equipage, artillery, cavalry, carrier-pigeon cotes on wheels, marching infantry, etc. There were miles of these things. A division in motion is a soul-stirring sight, and one which can never be forgotten; and it was marching, not away from but towards the front. And then one sees on his rides through the country thousands of men in training manoeuvers, striking or erecting camps, separate groups of Americans off duty in every village and along the beautiful countryside, establishing the "*entente cordiale*" with pretty French girls, playing with children, and generally making the best of their brief hours of relaxation. Last night favorable atmospheric conditions brought the sound of barrage fire somewhere on the front—a low rumble like the roll of distant thunder. These are the general impressions which have come to me during the week. As I have said before, the real things I would so much like to write about are the things which are forbidden to us to say, so that having exhausted and having even become so accustomed to the little gossip of this strange but indescribably interesting life, they have mostly become commonplace. It is not easy to tell you much that is new. France has just finished the harvest of the largest grain crop in her history. It is inspiring to see the entire family in the fields. In the harvesting of oats I saw everywhere a custom which was novel to me. The reaper swings his cradle through the grain; and as he swings it forward, his wife deftly takes the grain from the cradle, and drops it at her feet. The reaper does not stop his scythe an instant; and if the

joint motions were not perfectly synchronized, the woman would be cut as she takes the grain. And all this to save the second of time it would take the reaper to shake the grain from his cradle with each forward motion. And some of our fancy lady farmers have come over here to teach these clever people, who know how to grow wheat on the same land for a hundred successive years. The manure pile under the parlor window in the rural village is at once the outward, if odoriferous, symbol of wealth and the girls' hope of dowry. I hear of protests from villagers against the Americans using chloride of lime and other disinfectants in the latrines because they taint their drinking-water. I suppose that the centuries have immunized the natives against the effects of bad drinking-water.

The American chemist at one of our base hospitals was charged with analyzing samples of drinking-water from the various towns where our soldiers are billeted. He told me that of upwards of seventy samples he had already tested, only three were found to be safe for our men to drink. Can one wonder that light wines and the thin French beer are popular with the doughboy? And I know of certain A. R. C. men who are wicked enough to be kept in good health by the use of these wholesome beverages.

September 14, 1918.

I HAVE lately been in the field almost continuously. Have approximately fifty buildings under way—which keeps me on the jump to keep them going. They must be finished before cold weather sets in. One of the nights I was away,

the Boches dropped eight bombs here. There were no casualties. The front of a house in which one of my associates rooms was blown out, but he was at the Lafayette club playing pinochle, and so escaped.

Have had four calls at different times today from Pittsburgh acquaintances. It was like an Old Home Week. I said in one of my recent letters that probably by the time you received it the attention of the world would be attracted to this section. You knew yesterday that the expected had happened. We have known here for weeks that it would happen, and have been preparing for it.

During that period the exciting phases of the concentration of a great army for the major offensive of the war has been going on under our eyes. It has been a period of intense expectancy and of thrilling experiences. I was charged, in addition to my other duties, with the work of organizing the canteen service in connection with evacuation hospitals back of the lines, to care for, if needed, 100,000 casualties. When the battle started night before last, we had the necessary machinery ready. The men and women workers were at their stations, the kitchens and supplies on hand, and a system of *camions* properly scheduled to move the enormous amount of equipment and food.

Yesterday, Friday the 13th, bear in mind, was my greatest day in France. I made the rounds of these places; and saw the wounded men, all Americans, for it was exclusively an American affair, brought into the temporary hospitals from the field and served with an abundance of hot chocolate, tobacco, and comforts. I saw more than 5000 Boche prisoners who

clogged the roads, a motley and disheveled crowd, being marched back from the battle-field. The sky was alive with aeroplanes, but they were all allied ships. I do not see how a Boche plane could have broken through them.

The strings of ambulances, ammunition trucks; the lines of prisoners; the activity in the sky; the zeal with which our workers cared for the wounded as they were brought back; and the perfect system of the American attack, which it was feared might be costly beyond anything previously known, but which surprised every one by its small losses, considering the great results attained, were all tremendously inspiring. To ourselves, who had traveled behind the lines for almost their entire extent, the thought that the turning-point had at last really come became a firm conviction. The St. Mihiel salient had been pinched together, and our artillery had blasted its way through some of the most formidable Hun fortifications. Such was my great unlucky Friday the 13th, a day to have lived for, and one which I shall always be glad to have seen beyond all the great days I have had in France; and as you know, there have been many of them. A German officer prisoner was asked if he thought our forces could capture Metz. He replied "If you bombard Metz as you did Mont Sec last night, there will be no Metz for you to take." The scenes around these mobile hospitals are such as one might imagine of a gold camp which has sprung up over night—tents, shacks, trucks, and mud, plus war. This town, which until forty-eight hours ago was seething with war movement, is today as quiet as a Sunday on the farm. Our forces have pushed ahead so fast, thus leaving us far back of the big show, that I would not be

surprised if we evacuated our headquarters for a place nearer the frontier, I hope in Germany, if this push keeps going. Last night we could see the flashes reflected on the clouds, but could no longer hear the artillery. There is much sickness among our force. Of our mess of eight, four were in bed at the same time, one of them is in the hospital with pneumonia, the others had Spanish fever. I am well; was threatened for a day or two with it, but succeeded in fighting it off. I have intended every time I have written to urge the great importance here of tobacco. Tell everybody to loosen up for the tobacco funds of all kinds. There cannot be too much of it. The first thing a wounded man asks for after water is a cigarette. I have placed them in their mouths and lighted them when they could not move a hand. The cry everywhere is for cigarettes. They cannot come to us fast enough. *They are the most important single comfort* that comes over here, and not enough are coming. A surgeon told me that tobacco was second only in importance to medical and surgical supplies, and that he was even tempted to give it first place.

September 25, 1918.

WE have been almost submerged with an ever-increasing volume of work, and I have really the best excuse for not writing earlier. Even now I must confine this letter to mere outlines. Nicholas L. Tilney, one of our small mess, age thirty-four, a perfectly lovable character, who treated me not only as a confidant, but as a son should do, died of pneumonia following an attack of Spanish grippe; and we gave him a military funeral.

On the 20th Boche planes bombed the town, and then turned loose with machine-guns while flying just over the tree-tops by my windows. It was 11.30 p.m. in a full moon, and was almost as light as day. It was a damned unpleasant experience, and I never want to hear another machine-gun. No casualties. Yesterday at 5 p. m. another Boche plane shot up the other end of the town, and killed a French civilian, and dropped notices that twenty-four would visit us tonight. I slept with clothes enough on to make a decent get-away to the cellar. The night, however, was cloudy. and there was nothing doing. I made a trip northwest of here last week just back of the front. The following day, one town I stopped at was shelled through and through. I slept that night in a run-down château, with as fine grounds and surroundings as I have seen in France.

An interesting minor incident was the calling out of the class of 1920—boys marching from house to house with bugles and drums, calling out their fellows, who were decorated with tri-color ribbons and rosettes. They had wild celebrations in the evening, and the next day appeared in their neat cadet uniforms.

Since the operations have shifted to this part of the country, we are bothered with all sorts of people making what we call the "Ideal Tour," who somehow have secured enough influence to get into the zone. The organization has been the refuge of every degree of crank, but they have been so mercilessly weeded out that they count now for but little. The real people are solely trying to help win the war. The civil population, except in the wholly devastated districts, are now able

to and must look after their own; since about all the money for the support of our armies is being poured into France. I must not, however, write about such matters; but much could be said of the mercenary rapacity of the smaller commercial native interests.

The climate begins to be disagreeable, and I should like to get the work in shape to get home before the holidays especially (if it can be put in shape to turn over to others), as I feel that the war will end before winter sets in. A Vosges winter is something to be dreaded. It is a season of mud, sleet, and windy storms—perhaps as disagreeable, generally, as any climate below the Arctic circle; but it is very charming in summer. I have not had a day's rest since I came over, and shall begin to feel the need of a change.

Last week a hospital outside the zone, but not far across the line, was turned over to this department; and when I tell you that the Army has 570 buildings at that point and that the A. R. C. has some 40, the construction, furnishing, manning and womaning of which I shall have to supervise, it will convey some idea of the magnitude of our activities. Ten miles from that point is another almost as large. Besides these we have responsibility for a dozen or more canteen units. In fact I seem to be the amiable goat to whom everybody appears to want to pass the buck. It is not modest to refer too much to one's own work, but I must believe that it is thought to be going on pretty well or they would not be constantly increasing the load. Although there is much illness in this sector, I have remained well. After the next offensive, which we are hourly expecting to break, I am gradually going to try to unload and spend the winter with you.

Lorraine: 1918.

September 30, 1918.
A.P.O. 731, France.

My dear Louis:

I WAS delighted to receive today your most interesting letter of August 30th. Every word was like manna from heaven, and it was just the bulliest thing you could have sent me.

You *think* you are busy. Well, you know about the angel who became one because he was drowned in the Johnstown flood, and how Noah turned away saying "Oh Hell" when the Johnstown angel commenced telling him what a terrible freshet he had floated to heaven on. My name is Noah.

I am glad that you are seeing my letters to Ella. They are written for you all, and I have to steal the time to write them. I do wish I could write to all the friends who are thinking so kindly of me. I almost never see an American newspaper and have no opportunity to read more than the headlines of our French papers. Your war news is earlier and more complete than ours, although when the wind is right we can hear the guns, but thank God they are sounding fainter every day and we are in a fairly quiet sector except when a Boche plane shoots up the town.

The war ceases to be picturesque or poetic, and while the daily incidents connected with it in this advance zone are the most interesting that man has ever seen, one soon gets fed up on it, and the misery, the awful waste of life, the mutilations and the countless kinds of horror become so naturally to seem the normal things of life that the finer things become as children's memories. It is hateful in all of its phases, *mais, pour moi*, I am determined not to lose my interest in truth or

beauty regardless of my surroundings and this keeps me interested and, as I may say, as happy as most men can be. I shall look upon my life in France as the privilege of having lived another one—a busy, an interesting, and above all an instructive one. I think I have learned more about human nature—about cranks, quacks, and all sorts of bull in the last six months than in all my previous life.

I am so glad that you went out to Pittsburgh with the girls and your sister. By the way, I do hope that Ella found the key to the wine closet while you were there.

I do want you to write often, if only a line, but don't mind if I seem neglectful about replying—there is a reason—and I hope that Ella or Julian will see that you have as many of my letters home as I write, and that you will know that I am talking to you all. I am well and absorbed in what I have to do—but I am longing for home. I enclose a bread ticket in case you get hungry.

October 8, 1918.

I AM not going to continue apologies for falling behind in what is to me my greatest duty as well as pleasure, my relaxation from work to write to you.

I find that I wrote last on September 26. The important personal thing is that we have not been bombed since then, and the town has been peaceful. Since the Boches have taken a liking to us, the authorities have installed a siren for an *alerte* so that we may dig for the cave (cellar) when the warning shriek is sounded. Before that a bugler went through the streets, and generally got around by the time the raid had

ended and the Boche was well on his way home, relieved of his load. On the occasion of the last one, Georgette, the beloved and lovely fourteen-year-old daughter of Madame La Brosse, our equally beloved and ample cook and general housekeeper, tapped gently at my door, and tried to awaken me so that I could join the rest of the household in the vaulted cave of our château. I heard her; but the bed was so warm and I felt so safe under the thick feather bed, which, as in Germany, is the covering, that I did not answer. She returned down stairs not knowing whether a machine-gun bullet had got me or not, saying "*Il est terrible! il est terrible! Le pauvre Capitaine Burdeek, le pauvre Capitaine Burdeek, peut-être il est mort.*" When I came down to breakfast, I thought Georgette would hug me for joy.

I do not know if I told you about Mme. La Brosse; she is a wonder; there was never a more cheery cook; nothing is too much for her, and it is shameful how we overwork her. She is always laughing, always capable, and always anxious to oblige. M. La Brosse is a railroad employee at the *Gare*, but we see little of him. One seldom sees a Frenchman when his wife is in the neighborhood. If there is anything more wonderful than a French housewife, it is a French poilu. We had H. P. Davison and Harvey Gibson, Red Cross Commissioners to France, as our guests for three days; and if the truth were known it might develop that they stayed on because of Mme. La Brosse's marvelous *Omelettes Soufflés-au-rhum*.

Our mess table is set for eight people, and generally it is filled. There never was such a men's club; and the stories we hear every evening from Officers and other guests are always fresh from the field, generally only a few hours old.

The other day, I was given a trophy by an Officer who saw the incident. It is the original flag which gave the word for the first advance over the top by the Americans on the morning of the great offensive of September 26 near Verdun. It was waved by an American Lieutenant who was immediately blown to pieces by a shell; the blood-stained flag was recovered and rests peacefully in my trunk. The flag is white with red cross bars. The Lieutenant is thought to have been the first man killed on our side in that great battle.

Then there is "Papa" Broussard, the gardener, fire builder, and cleaner of boots, a dear obliging old chap, too elderly to fight, but with the fine temper and manner of a French gentleman. Another of my acquaintances is M'lle Philbric, daughter of a well-to-do widow. She is educated, and speaks English. Her interest is in finding work for the lace makers who have been having poor business. She is proud of French textile art, and without profit to herself tries to find work for them in their vocation. This region is the home of some of the finest lace and embroidery work in France—the *dentelle de Mirecourt* or *dentelle aux fuseaux*. I will simply say that I have not overlooked the opportunity to see that some of these wizards with the needle were given a chance to earn something.

September 27, entertained Mrs.——at lunch; 28, out on inspection trip; 29, again on the road; 30, Wilson McClintock of Pittsburgh (Aviation Service) visits me and wants to be particularly remembered to Julian; 31, start on a three days' trip South. Go through the Burgundy wine district while the vintage is on. The contrast of that genial, inviting,

and rich country, beautiful and restful, against the growing gray of this country of hills and autumn storms was striking.

There were other impressive things having to do with the war which I may not write about or you would probably not get this letter at all.

Four days ago was a real red-letter day. In the same mail I received letters from yourself, Helene, Sarah, Lou Evans, Louis Banker, and the Bank of Pittsburgh. You know that while it is difficult for me to find time to write, there is always time to read letters and I do wish I could receive more. They are the very joy of life here, and every day I am trying to help soldiers who are hungry for news from home.

There is little else that I can say except that we are rejoiced at the turn the war is taking, and are anxiously awaiting Wilson's reply to the last peace overtures. Everything is going well, and there is much speculation as to whether the end is not nearer than we dare confidently hope. There is no relaxation, however, in our work; and we are not hesitating a moment in our hospitalization programme. We authorized last week the construction of 21 Red Cross buildings at one hospital—this will convey to you a hint of what kind of a job this is.

Sunday is like all other days—but no two days are at all alike in this game.

I do not know whether I shall be able to get to you or not the coming winter. I have to consider a lot of things before I can decide, but the Kaiser may call out "Kamerad" almost any day. His cause is doomed, and it is difficult to believe that he does not know it.

I am in fine health and spirits, but I would appreciate a few days' rest as soon as I can see my way clear to get away.

I hear that Paris is gay again and full of people. There has been a great change in the spirit of the French since the tide turned on July 18, and I see less need for American Civil relief in France. Think only of our own fighting forces from now on.

It is too dark to write more, 5:15 P. M.

Hotel Continental, Paris, October 17, 1918.

HERE I am, and it seems like heaven. I left a sea of mud, fogs, and rain behind me in the Vosges on Tuesday after putting things in shape for my Assistant to "carry on," and beat it to Paris for a rest. I was and still am quite fagged after six months of strenuosity, and while every R. C. person is entitled to a vacation at three-month intervals, I did not take mine, and stayed on until everyone became sick; but kept well myself. The grippe epidemic hit almost everybody at the front, and I am ready to confess that I became afraid to get sick in that country. They have not much use for a man up there after he is dead, and his bones might get lost. Personally, I feel that the war is over except the "mopping up;" and after consulting with myself and talking to some of my friends, I decided that sometime in the near future there is going to be a stampede homeward; so today I have taken a room on the *Espagne*, one of the finest of the French Line ships, to sail from Bordeaux about the 18th of November. At a farewell dinner night before last to two of our Lorraine mess at the Grand Vatel—which, by the way, went off with *éclat*—

I dropped one of my prejudices. I learned to like *escargots*—the word looks better than its English equivalent. They were delicious, as they were served. Some of them had shells half as big as a baby's fist and meat as large as a cherry stone clam. My guests sail today.

I have seen Paris in three phases this year. Last April, when the collapse of the 5th British army left the way open to the Boches, if they had only known it, the city was strained with apprehension. I saw it again early in August when it was practically depopulated and was being shelled, and now the boulevards and restaurants are crowded, the hotels turning people away, and Paris is for the first time in more than four years unafraid. The signs of mourning, which were so universal heretofore, are less in evidence, but still enough to depress one who had not become thoroughly accustomed to this all pervasive symbol of a Nation's sufferings.

Last evening I dined at the Inter-Allied Officers' Club, located in Baron Rothschild's city house in the *Faubourg St.-Honoré*. I saw Admiral May and the British and French Naval Chiefs, and a dozen or more functionaries there at dinner. They all looked very happy as was becoming with Victory in the air. There were lights too—a few only, to be sure, —in the *Place de la Concorde*, for the first time, and rolling through the *rue Rivoli* in the beautiful misty moonlight were long lines of Boche cannon just from the Champagne front, moving through the luminous mystery of a soft fog, turning in to the *Concorde* where tomorrow they will be on exhibition in hundreds. It was a picture Whistler would have loved. It was all so silent, so mysterious, and so beautiful. I wish that you were here now.

Interest never flags, the general depression of the earlier days is passing, and I hope that in the spring things will have become so normal that we can come together. France will clearly emerge greater than ever; and as I have said before, it is pleasant now to be an American in France. I want to go down to Nice for a few days before sailing. I shall have about a month, but I may have to spend some of that time working. There is still a lot to be done, but I feel that I have already accomplished what I came over to do. I am really in need of a rest, and am not going to take on any more big things, which might keep me going all winter. New men are coming over by every ship, and can take up duties as we relinquish them. It has been about two weeks since I have heard from any of the family.

If you have occasion to write or cable, address care of Morgan, Harjes & Co., Paris. They will deliver or forward to me. It will hardly be worth while to write to me after this reaches you. The mails are very slow.

Nice, October 30, 1918.

THE day following the night procession of captured artillery, referred to in my last letter, I walked over to the *Place de la Concorde;* and found that during the night the great square had been filled with cannon of every size, machine-guns, and tanks, all queerly painted in camouflage designs. Just back in the Tuilleries Gardens a row of *avions*—large and small—was placed in a line extending from the *rue Rivoli* to the Seine along the parapet of the wall which separates the two parks; while just back of the wall a pyramid of

German steel helmets—every one with one or more holes through it—had been erected on each side of the central opening from the *Concorde* to the Tuilleries.

There was also the remains of the giant Zeppelin which was brought down near *Bourbonne-les-Bains* while returning from a London bombing expedition.

Although the day was rainy, vast crowds were circulating among the trophies under the Florentine masts with their picturesque mediaeval-looking banners, which had been erected during the night and which gave color and brilliancy to the scene. These crowds were interesting in that there was no impulsive or nervous exultation. Their air was quietly and decorously serious as if it had been a matter of course that some day France would have the great trophies of the beaten robber nation on exhibition in the finest place in the world for such a purpose. Without advertisement or excitement Paris has prepared and is preparing for what will doubtless be the greatest celebration of a triumphal issue of war that the world has ever seen. It will be a day of great historic import, and I hope that it will come when I am here. Those who are in this city at that time will be lucky.

I left Paris on the evening train of the 21st for Nice. The coaches were crowded with soldiers, American, French, English, and Anzac. They were lying on the floors of the corridors so thickly that one could hardly pass from one compartment to another. Fortunately, I had succeeded in having a compartment seat reserved; and although the night was cold and the train unheated, I was fairly comfortable in my heavy clothing. The rain during the following morning obscured

much of the scenery along the Rhone; there were passing glimpses, however, of the *Château des Papes* at Avignon and of Tarascon, the home of Daudet's fiery and intrepid Tartarin, of blessed memory, of the noble river and its fine battlemented hills, and a momentary glance at the Roman Theatre at Nismes—I always enjoy the fleeting car window impressions of a country which is new to me. From Marseilles to Nice the weather had cleared, and the ripe and colorful views of mountains, valleys, and the sea held enchantment for me until it became too dark to see more. My fellow-travelers in the compartment from Paris were a French Colonel, a French Captain, and a man, his wife, and daughter of perhaps sixteen on their way to their villa near Nice for the winter—a refined and gentle family. At Marseilles a woman cook, with the traditional rotundity of figure and redness of complexion, and carrying a basket, which probably contained her earthly possessions, commandeered one of the officers' seats which the owner had momentarily left; but she never knew that the officer was obliged to stand in the corridor for five hours because he was too polite to claim his own. Imagine what a German officer would do in the circumstances. This woman, like almost all women in France, was in black. The gentle lady to the cook: "You have given a son, *Madame*?" The cook: "Yes, *Madame*, one, *et vous, Madame*?" The gentle lady: "Yes *Madame*, two." Then monsieur, the gentle lady, and the cook were on common ground; and in low sympathetic voices told one another about their boys, their service, when and where killed; while the young daughter fixed her large eyes on the ceiling without change of expression save two great tear drops.

There was no class restraint or reserve; the women were in communion in their common loss, but except for the daughter's moist eyes there were no tears, no expressions of regret. We arrived at Nice at 6 P. M. The following day was too rainy to attempt to see anything of the place; in fact this is the wettest and most weather-fickle season of the year on the Riviera. I will not attempt to tell you about the place. The guide books to which you can refer are full of descriptive matter.

On one of the rarely fine days, I motored from Nice to Mentone, over the *Grande Corniche;* and returned by the *Lower-Corniche* road, said to be the most attractive automobile trip in the world. So far as I know it is. It is too attractive to attempt to describe. Again, I refer you to the guide books. I returned with impressions of cascades of flowers over the walls enclosing villas, of the snowy Alps cut sharply against an unbelievably blue sky, of the sapphire sea far below us, bordered with saffron- and pink-roofed cream-colored villas, groves of the palm like Italian pines with their crowns of almost black green, and of gardens of tropical luxuriance—all in golden sunshine—and thanked God that He had given me eyes to see and a soul to appreciate such a wealth of beauty and color, and wondered if there could elsewhere be its equal. It was my first visit to this entrancing corner of the world.

Other incidents were a day at Monte Carlo where no officer in uniform may go beyond the glass door which opens into the *Salle de jeu*, a visit to Monaco and its sea museum, and a memorable Sunday afternoon as a guest on Cape Ferrat, at what I am told is the finest villa on the Riviera, the home of

Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Curtis, Americans who have lived there for eighteen years. The gardens are superb, and the house is adorned with art treasures of the first rank. To outward appearances, Nice is remote from the war, and yet the hotels and streets were alive with soldiers and officers of all nations convalescing or on "permission." Many of the hotels, and of these there is legion, have been converted into hospitals. The principal recreation pier had been leased by the Y. M. C. A. and was being prepared as a place of entertainment for soldiers. Otherwise, the city is as in times of peace. There were many sea-planes and dirigibles patrolling the coast against submarines.

I found the climate too relaxing and the weather too treacherous for real recuperation, and was quite content after two weeks to return to the mists and cold of Paris.

Paris, November 15, 1918.

I AM leaving for Bordeaux this evening on the way home. How fortunately my dates have worked out to permit me to witness the supreme joy of France over the victorious ending of the war, as it was expressed in Paris.

I arrived in Paris from Nice on the 6th inst. The weather during the following week was as wretched as possible. I was so fully engaged, however, that time passed quickly. It seemed that, sensing the coming peace, almost every person I knew in France had found an excuse to come to Paris. The city was crowded; the hotels were as cold as before; and the restaurants, which a few weeks earlier were all but deserted, were now crowded with cheerful, happy throngs. There was no re-

laxation, however, in the regulations for early closing or in the food and heat restrictions. On the 10th (Sunday) the weather had improved, the news of the Kaiser's abdication was out. Flag decorations began to appear, great crowds were moving and restraining their enthusiasm as if they did not quite know what to think about the Armistice proposals, and as if the great news seemed to be impossible after the four years of horror. These crowds were, nevertheless, quietly happy; and momentum was undeniably gaining for a great rejoicing at the proper time. I wrote in my diary that evening, "If the Armistice is signed tomorrow there will be such demonstrations of joy as have never been seen." The entry of the following day reads, "And there were." At 11 A. M. cannon and bells announced that the supreme moment had arrived. At the first gun, I was coming out of Morgans, Harjes & Co.'s bank and decided that the thing to do was to go as quickly as possible to the Strassburg monument, which I thought would be a focal point of the beginning of the demonstrations.

This beautiful memorial of the lost Provinces for which France had been in mourning for almost fifty years, had become through the years an immortal symbol of belief that in time all of the lost things for which it stood would come back. The moment had arrived, and I was fortunate enough to get there to see a man go up a ladder and place a gold wreath of laurel on the head. I stood on the coping of a wall near the monument from where I had a good view of the crowd which filled the *Place de la Concorde*. The frenzy of delight, which found expression in singing, in dancing, in tears, and in the general embracing of every one by every one else, spread like

a conflagration in all directions. One wondered at the riot of decorations, which burst in an instant, as it were, until the streets and the buildings were smothered in color. All day, all night, and all of the next day, the city surged with such manifestations of happiness as could only come from the quick reaction from years of the most intense strain and suffering a nation has ever been called upon to endure.

You will read all about this celebration from the pens of the best newspaper correspondents; but even these men say that, as in many other events in the great drama of the last four years, they are well nigh helpless. One must see with one's own eyes to understand. This celebration can be visualized only as a composite impression. My own impressions were that joy was universal, that the crowds were so great it seemed as if the whole world were out holidaying, and yet somehow one moved easily through the throngs except in special places, where perhaps bands were playing, or in the vicinity of the Opera House while the operatic stars were singing out-of-doors. There was no littering the streets with torn paper, confetti or rubbish. There were no police in sight, there was no offensive drunkenness, and nothing of the coarseness, which characterizes so many street celebrations at home.

I did not see a quarrel or a cross man. *Camaraderie* and demonstrative friendliness were universal. There were no soap-box orators, no red flags. There was not an inharmonious note in the general tone of the rejoicing. The inspiring "Marseillaise" was being sung everywhere, by individuals and by groups. One went to bed with the tune teasing his brain like Mark Twain's jingle of "Punch brothers, punch with care," etc.

You have read of the dancing circles hand in hand, which came dancing through the streets by the hundreds, surrounding whomsoever they started for, generally men in uniform and particularly those who were in American uniform.

Children, here and there, were dragging Boche machine-guns to their homes. It is said that when the police reported to Clemenceau that they were unable to prevent the people from taking parts of guns, machine-guns, and other trophies away with them, he replied, "Let them take them; there are more where they came from." Well, in short, I have an impression of oceans of humanity at play and for two days and nights expending all of the pent up and suppressed emotion of four years in one great extravagant outburst of joy. This will be my last letter from France. I sail on the *Espagne* day after to-morrow; and if all goes well, shall take my Thanksgiving dinner with you.

Appendix.

AMERICAN RED CROSS
(*Croix Rouge Americaine*)

Paris, November 12, 1918.

From: R. G. Hutchins Jr.,
Director Home and Hospital Bureau.

To: Captain J. W. Burdick,
American Red Cross

Subject: Work with the American Red Cross.

YOU have told me that you were returning to the United States within the next two or three days, and I cannot let the opportunity go by to express not only the personal regard I have for you as a result of our coming in contact in this Red Cross work during the last seven months, but officially, as the Director of the Home and Hospital Bureau, I want to express my appreciation of the work you have done.

Your work in what was formerly called the Advance Zone, and now the Eastern Zone, with Headquarters in Neufchâteau has been splendid in every way. You have not only performed the exacting duties of the Chief of this Bureau in your Zone with tact and energy, but your influence has been for the good to all Red Cross workers with whom you have come in contact.

Never have you found fault; never have you failed to do the job as it was put up to you in the right spirit and the right

way; and never have we had the slightest anxiety as to how the work would be performed that came under your charge. I cannot close this letter without telling you that I have learned to love you and will always prize the friendship formed during the last seven months.

Hoping that you may have a safe trip, and that you will find all your family well, I remain,

Most sincerely yours,

R. G. HUTCHINS JR.,
Director, Home and Hospital Bureau.

AMERICAN RED CROSS
(*Croix Rouge Americaine*)

4 *Place de la Concorde,*
Paris, November 12, 1918.

From; J. B. A. Fosburgh, Major A. R. C.
Director General, Army and Navy Department.

To: Joel W. Burdick, Captain A. R. C.
Chief, H. & H., Service Section, Northeastern Zone.

Subject: Appreciation of Service in A. R. C.

I DO not feel that I can permit you to return home without expressing to you my appreciation, not only of the splendid service which you have rendered this organization, but of the very real pleasure which I have had in meeting and knowing you.

I feel that to your vision as to the needs and to your aggres-

sive spirit, is due the credit for the way in which we have been able to take care of the sick and wounded fresh from the fighting line. It was a big and difficult job, most ably handled.

But in addition to a sense of actual accomplishment, I hope that you have some realization of the effect which your personality, spirit, and tireless energy have had upon the morale of the entire organization with which you were identified. I myself have felt the stimulus every time that I came in contact with you in the field. The conditions under which you lived and worked must have been extremely trying and tiring, and you have been perfectly splendid through all these months.

I hope I shall have the pleasure of seeing something of you when we are both back in the States. I know we will recall with intense satisfaction our months of service in France.

J. B. A. Fosburgh,
Director General,
Army and Navy Department.

AMERICAN RED CROSS
(*Croix Rouge Americaine*)

Paris, November 25, 1918.

Mr. Joel W. Burdick,
906 Amberson Ave.,
Pittsburgh, Pa.

Dear Sir:—

ON the occasion of your departure for the United States I desire to express on behalf of the Commission to France its appreciation of the satisfactory services you have rendered

to the American Red Cross in France during the past seven months in the department of Military Affairs.

Very truly yours,

H. D. GIBSON,

Commissioner for France.

Images Processed by Gary Brin
Copyright © Nancy Hanks Lincoln Public Library

NANCY HANKS LINCOLN PUBLIC LIBRARY
Historical Book Collection

Nancy Hanks Lincoln Public Library

NANCY HANKS LINCOLN PUBLIC LIBRARY
Historical Book Collection